



**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 2ND FLOOR
AUGUST 8, 2011
4:00 P.M.**

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in the City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall Building, August 8, 2011, 4:00 p.m.

Chair Riccillo called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

The following Commissioners were present:

Mr. Joe Riccillo, Chair
Mr. Hugo Gardea, Vice-Chair
Mr. Joel Guzman (4:05)
Mr. Ricardo Gonzalez
Mr. Jim Booher
Mr. David Berchermann

The following City Staff were present:

Mr. Robert Almonte, City Attorney's Office, Assistant City Attorney
Ms. Providencia Velázquez, Planning, Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Tony De La Cruz, Planning, Planner

I. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT

None



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CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes.

MOTION:

Motion made by Chair Riccillo, seconded by Vice-Chair Gardea and
UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS IT STANDS.

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Commissioner Guzman

II. REGULAR AGENDA – DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Certificate of Appropriateness

1. **PHAP11-00027** Being 101 Government Hill 27 to 29 & Pt Of 26 & Pt Of 30,
City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 230 Pennsylvania
Historic District: Austin Terrace
Property Owner: Rosemary Anton
Representative: Rosemary Anton
Representative District: 2
Existing Zoning: R-4/H (Residential/Historic)
Year Built: 1930
Historic Status: Contributing
Request: The construction of a pergola at the rear façade.
Application Filed: July 25, 2011
45 Day Expiration: September 8, 2011

Ms. Velázquez gave a PowerPoint presentation and stated the applicant seeks approval for the construction of a pergola at the rear façade. She stated the pergola will be open, made of wood and have posts and beams and may be slightly visible from the Right-of-Way.



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**STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK
BASED ON THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Magoffin Historic District Design Guidelines recommends the following:

- + New structures should respect the integrity of existing buildings.
- + New additions should be planned so that they are constructed to the rear of the property or on a non-character defining elevation.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- + The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property.

Questions of Staff and/or property owner.

Vice-Chair Gardea assumed the pergola would be painted white.

Ms. Rose Anton, property owner, responded it would not be painted, it will be stained.

Mr. Mario Gomez, contractor, was also present.

Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any further discussion.

MOTION:

Motion made by Vice-Chair Gardea, seconded by Commissioner Berchelmann and
CARRIED TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED.

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2. **PHAP11-00028** The East 16 Feet 8 inches of Lot 25 and the West 16 Feet 8 inches of Lot 26, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 617 Prospect Avenue
- Historic District: Sunset Heights
- Property Owner: Eduardo Contreras
- Representative: Eduardo Contreras
- Representative District: 8
- Existing Zoning: A-2/H (Apartment/Historic)
- Year Built: 1919
- Historic Status: Contributing
- Request: The re-construction of a front porch
- Application Filed: August 1, 2011
- 45 Day Expiration: September 15, 2011

Ms. Velázquez gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained the applicant seeks approval for the re-construction of a front porch. She stated the property owner recently purchased the property and the structure needs quite a bit of work. Due to significant deterioration, the property owner had to remove the front porch; however, he is in the process of reconstructing the columns, the railing and the detail in the dentils.

**STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK
BASED ON THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Magoffin Historic District Design Guidelines recommends the following:

- + New structures should respect the integrity of existing buildings.
- + A porch and all of its architectural elements should be maintained and repaired. If elements must be replaced, material should match the original construction.



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The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- + Replacing in kind an entire entrance or porch that is too deteriorated to repair – if the form and detailing are still evident using the physical evidence as a model to reproduce the feature. If using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered.

Questions of Staff and/or property owner.

RAILING

Vice-Chair Gardea commended Mr. Contreras for purchasing and restoring the property. He asked Staff if the columns would be used as a model and if there was any evidence of a pedestal or pedestal base. He questioned whether or not the railing would be painted. He stated due to the railing located right in front of the street, historically, the railing would be painted and recommended that it be painted. He added, historically, there would be a wood rail especially given there is a door up there.

Ms. Velázquez responded the columns were so deteriorated they could not be reused successfully; however, they would be used as a model. There was no evidence of a pedestal or pedestal base. She was unsure if the railing would be painted; however, she recommended the railing be painted black or green so as not to stand out.

Regarding the metal railing rods, Commissioner Gonzalez suggested more substantial posts on the ends or at intervals, something to provide substance other than just a long row of very thin wrought iron rods. He felt the 2" or 4" wrought iron posts would tend to have more substance.

Mr. Eduardo Contreras, property owner, was almost sure the previous railing was wood; however, the deterioration was too significant to tell. He was agreeable to either wood or wrought iron railing, something not too expensive.

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Vice-Chair Gardea and Commissioner Gonzalez agreed there should be substantial mass at the corners; for example, pedestal columns, which could be made of metal, with some kind of trim on the top.

Commissioner Booher explained the issue is the articulation of the assembly and accentuating the corners. The detail is totally devoid of any articulation. Commissioner Booher stated the railing does not need to be ornate; however, regarding the intermediates, there needs to be some rhythm. He requested the property owner acknowledge the rhythm of the wood columns below.

Commissioner Guzman reiterated Commissioners are suggesting 4 x 4 posts at the end and 4 x 4 above the other two columns. Commissioner Guzman also commended the property owner for taking on this project of heroic proportions.

Commissioner Gonzalez added the 4 x 4 iron posts would have something on top, either a finial or a nice cap.

Commissioner Booher was unsure if Commissioners could ask the property owner to confer with Ms. Velázquez regarding the wrought iron detail. He felt the wrought iron detail was typical of the era and in El Paso.

In conclusion, Ms. Velázquez clarified Commissioners are requesting:

1. something more substantial on the corners with more detail;
2. can be either iron or wood, to be determined by the applicant; and
3. railing painted to match the rest of the porch

Commissioner Booher added Commissioners:

1. were not concerned with the choice of materials;
2. see an opportunity regarding the massing and changing of the corner condition relative to the typical uprights and possibly the top and bottom railings, which are usually heavier than the verticals.



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Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any further discussion.

MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Booher, seconded by Chair Riccillo and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE BASED ON RATIFICATION BY MS. VELÁZQUEZ RELATIVE TO THE DETAIL ASCRIBED TO THE RAILING CONDITION, INCLUDED BUT NOT LIMITED TO:**

1. **THE CORNER CONDITION;**
 2. **THE TOP AND BOTTOM RAIL; AND**
 3. **ANY ARTICULATION REGARDING THE RHYTHM OF THE ASSEMBLY**
3. Addresses of property HLC Commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, Commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. August 8, 2011 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the August 22, 2011 meeting. August 22, 2011 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the September 12, 2011 meeting.
- A. Magoffin Villas at 915, 917, 1001 Magoffin Avenue and 1000, 1008, 1010 Myrtle Avenue

Ms. Velázquez gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained construction is ongoing and moving rapidly. Staff went to the site to and took pictures of the façade on Myrtle Avenue and the wrought iron fencing in the rear of the property. Per the submitted Landscape Rendering, the wrought iron fence under construction looks like the rendering.



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Commissioner Gonzalez noted the rendering shows a black wrought iron fence; however, he noticed portions of the fence are gray and portions are reddish brown color.

Ms. Velázquez explained that may be primer, the contractor may be waiting to finish the detail until the entire wrought iron fence has been constructed.

B. Fall Mansion at 1725 Arizona Avenue

Ms. Velázquez explained the City of El Paso Engineering and Construction Management Department hired a consultant to photograph the remodeling project and post them on the web. Ms. Velazquez showed photos of the exterior and interior project progression and added should Commissioners wish to tour the facility she could arrange that for them.

C. Houston Elementary at 2851 Grant Avenue

Ms. Velázquez explained at the July 28, 2011, City Plan Commission meeting, Commissioners unanimously approved the Historic Landmark Commission recommendation. The recommendation will now come before City Council sometime in late September.

HLC Staff Report

4. Update on Administrative Review Cases since last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any comments or questions.

Regarding 617 Prospect Avenue, Commissioner Guzman noted, the property owner is different from the case heard previously.



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Mr. De La Cruz explained Staff utilizes information provided by the El Paso Central Appraisal District; information is not as updated as one would like.

5. Acorn light fixture options and the dark sky ordinance.

Ms. Velázquez explained Staff researched and found that acorn light fixtures can be retrofitted, without too much trouble, to comply with the dark sky ordinance. Rather than using a light bulb, a small box is inserted underneath so that the light shines downward.

Vice-Chair Gardea clarified there is not a shield inside the shade.

Mr. De La Cruz explained when retrofitting the acorn fixtures with LED, the LEDs are mounted at an inverted pyramid which provides the shield required by the dark sky ordinance. If not completely cutoff, the shield allows only 2% ratio to emit. He noted that the majority of City projects are utilizing the energy efficient LED lighting.

Vice-Chair Gardea stated that is something Commissioners will keep in mind for the future.

Planning & Economic Development Department Reports

6. None

Visionaries in Preservation Report

7. Legislative Update from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) – Visionaries in Preservation (VIP) will be dormant for at least the next two years, possibly longer, due to recent budget cuts.

Copies of an email from the THC were distributed to Commissioners. Ms. Velázquez explained the THC budget was hit hard, budget was cut 50%; therefore, the THC has placed a moratorium on the VIP program for at least two years. We can continue with the VIP program; however, we cannot ask the THC for any funding.



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Vice-Chair Gardea wondered if the CLG program was funded for grants.

Ms. Velázquez was unsure exactly what affects the budget cuts would have on the CLG program. Per the email message, 67 employees within the Texas Historical Commission lost their jobs.

Other Business

8. A. Approval of Historic Landmark Commission Meeting Minutes for July 25, 2011.

Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any changes/corrections/revisions. There being none.

MOTION:

Motion made by Commissioner Berchelmann, seconded by Chair Riccillo and
UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE JULY 25, 2011 MINUTES.

- B. Discussion and action on application review regarding demolition changes.

Ms. Velázquez stated there is a case in Dallas that may have repercussions, Mr. Almonte will update Commissioners.

Mr. Almonte explained City Attorney Staff are currently exploring all options of the recent change in law and its impact on demolitions regarding any buildings and how it applies specifically to historic buildings.

Chair Riccillo requested Staff update Commissioners on the status.

Staff will continue to post the item on future agendas.

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C. Discussion and action regarding Administrative Review Guidelines.

Ms. Velázquez thanked Commissioner Guzman and Vice-Chair Gardea for submitting their recommendations. The next step will be to review and discuss the proposed recommendations with the HLC. Once everyone agrees, Staff will implement the agreed upon recommendations into all other Historic District Guidelines.

Mr. De La Cruz explained Staff shall prepare a PowerPoint presentation regarding the submitted recommendations for presentation at the next HLC meeting.

Chair Riccillo requested Staff email the comments/recommendations to Commissioners for review and preparation for the next HLC meeting.

D. Discussion regarding San Jacinto Plaza

Mr. Almonte explained there will be a Special Meeting of the Historic Landmark Commission, Thursday, August 11, 2011, 5:00 p.m., in the Mayor's Meeting Room for a presentation of the proposed San Jacinto Plaza design. Several changes, based on comments received from the HLC, to the design have been already been made. A determination was made that no action would be taken and that a Certificate of Appropriateness was not necessary for this specific project. However, there is still immense interest and input wanted from the Commissioners. This is an open meeting; the public is invited to attend.

Commissioner Berchelmann questioned why there would not be a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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Mr. Almonte explained, in the early 1990s, an ordinance was approved which designated the Downtown Historic District, soon afterward another ordinance was passed whereas the Design Guidelines applied only to contributing properties. Attached to that second ordinance was a map designating contributing and non-contributing properties, San Jacinto Plaza was designated a non-contributing property. San Jacinto Plaza is a city owned property.

Commissioner Berchelmann questioned why Commissioners could not take any action at the Special Meeting.

Mr. Almonte explained it is not necessary that the proposed design come before Commissioners; however, there is interest in hearing any comments, concerns, suggestions from Commissioners. Regarding the alligator statue in the center of the Plaza, those involved with the proposed design have incorporated the statue within the design.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked Staff what determines whether or not a property is contributing or non-contributing; additionally, he wondered if there was an ordinance establishing that criteria.

FOR THE RECORD

Ms. Velázquez responded that within the Downtown Historic District Guidelines there is an ordinance absolving the non-contributing properties from complying with the guidelines. For the record, she stated that this is extremely unusual. In all her years working in the historic preservation field, she has never seen it written that non-contributing properties do not have to abide by the guidelines. In most municipalities, as a matter of policy, non-contributing properties may be treated a bit more leniently; however, they must still abide by the guidelines. It is only in this case, that the Downtown Historic District guidelines state non-contributing properties do not have to follow the guidelines. It is unfortunate

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that when the map was created, the San Jacinto Plaza was not listed as a contributing property.

Mr. Almonte explained based on comments/input made by Commissioners several months ago, changes to the proposed design were incorporated.

Chair Riccillo stated there were two public meetings regarding the proposed design that Commissioners were invited to attend.

Commissioner Booher responded he had attended one of those meetings and conveyed his concerns at that time. He asked Staff what the name of the project is and explained calling it a "Plaza" for whatever reason, has been found too provincial. A plaza has certain connotations, especially in a Hispanic culture, relative to its placement, sense of being in place, etc. He understood the design was privately funded.

Commissioner Guzman concurred the design phase was privately funded; however, actual construction will be publically funded.

Mr. Almonte stated all Commissioners' comments will be forwarded to City Council; additionally, Thursday is another opportunity for more input and public comment.

Commissioner Gonzalez questioned why the ordinance designating the Downtown Historic District does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness for non-contributing properties. Does that ordinance state what is a contributing and what is a non-contributing property?

Mr. Almonte clarified the guidelines were not applicable to non-contributing properties. The ordinance does not define what is a contributing or non-contributing property. Included with the ordinance is a map of the downtown area identifying which properties are contributing and which properties are non-

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contributing. This situation does not apply to any other historic districts; this is unique to the Downtown Historic District. The ordinance numbers referenced are Ordinance # 010877 (original) and Ordinance #010917 (amending).

Commissioner Berchelmann felt it was unfortunate that; based on a technicality, Commissioners were overlooked.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Mr. Miguel Juarez, Doctoral Student in History at The University of Texas at El Paso, areas of focus are Borderland, U. S. and Urban history.

"LOS LAGARTOS" SCULPTURE

Mr. Juarez represents a group of growing citizens in support of the redevelopment of San Jacinto Plaza as a public space but who oppose the removal of the Luis Jimenez "Los Lagartos" alligator sculpture. In our eyes, this is non-negotiable. The "Los Lagartos", like the Plaza, does not represent just a piece of art but embodies cultural, social aspirations and the lives of countless people who have historically congregated at La Placita of generations long gone and those who recently rode the buses to get back and forth to their jobs and their destinations.

NOT A "PLAZA" BUT A "SQUARE"

On Google, the San Jacinto Plaza is now not a Plaza it is being referred to as a "Square."

REDESIGN PROPOSAL PAID FOR BY A PRIVATE FIRM

Also, the redesign proposal was gifted to the City by a private firm, Mills Properties and they want the citizens to pay for it.

REMOVAL OF THE "LOS LAGARTOS" SCULPTURE

Also, the City has informed us that the conservation of the Jimenez sculpture dictates that the sculpture needs to be removed and that its preservation is

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occurring at the same time that lands are being proposed for the Plaza's redevelopment. We do not believe this statement. We do not feel it is a coincidence by the plan and part of developers and the City to fast track the sculpture's removal. If conservation was so terribly important why was public discussion of its removal not initiated until now? The alligators' iconic nature represents the Plaza's historical beginnings. The sculpture is an important piece of history and, at the same time, represents The Soul, La Alma of the Plaza and in its removal the City and Mills Properties will be ripping that history from us.

THE ARTIST, LUIS JIMENEZ

"Los Lagartos" represents art by an important local artist of natural stature who was born and raised here in El Paso and that is Luis Jimenez. We are not convinced "the beast" needs to be moved off-site to be restored. Other cities like Houston have restored similar Jimenez pieces on-site. We feel the City will use the most recent conservator's report as well as the recommendations from Commissioners to remove the work. We urge you to seek further input on the City's plans and invite public discussion and discourse on the development of not only the Plaza but also the future of Jimenez sculptures. Additionally, we would like to be apprised of any decisions so that we can offer public input and show that there really is a big interest in keeping the original character of the Plaza but also to the sculpture.

POORLY ATTENDED PUBLIC MEETINGS

I also want to say that the design forums, meetings or charettes were poorly attended.

Questions of Commissioners.

Commissioner Guzman asked if Mr. Juarez would support relocating the sculpture within the Plaza.



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Mr. Juarez responded that was negotiable. If we had a choice of keeping the sculpture or not keeping the sculpture and it included relocating, we would probably do it. Some people in the group feel the sculpture has to remain in the center. People would not go to a museum to see it; it is here for us to see for free. He personally is open to relocating the sculpture within the Plaza, the important thing is keeping it Downtown and to keep it there where people can see it anytime they want to.

Vice-Chair Gardea asked if Mr. Juarez was aware of the meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Juarez responded no, we really have not been. There is wide public interest and we have a petition with over 500 signatures representing curators, artists, and scholars from all over the country. We have a Facebook page; over 30,000 have seen it; there has been very little communication with us. They know who we are, they know how to get in touch with us but for some reason it is not a two way conversation, yet. We have a meeting with the Mayor tomorrow.

For Mr. Juarez, Chair Riccillo reiterated the meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Meeting Room.

Commissioner Gonzalez noted Mr. Juarez was very concerned about what will happen to the sculpture, understandably so. He asked if he shared that same concern with the proposed change to the character of the whole Plaza, including the name.

Mr. Juarez responded this is the Plaza that has been designed, like all Plazas from here to Mexico, you will find the same plaza. We are in favor of turning it into contemporary space where people can congregate because I assume they wanted to do programming, concerts and things like that. What needs to be found is to keep its historical character in place but at the same time have the amenities and luxuries of having a contemporary space. I'm



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talking about things like bathrooms, signage, places for people to sit down, areas where people can walk and not trip over the sidewalk, the parking. These are things that people need to come back to downtown but at the same time how much of the original character has been lost? It is my understanding that in each redesign the character slowly got written off. There was an attempt to maintain the character of the Plaza with the motifs that were painted/formed on the benches, that is a form of keeping the historical presence of the Plaza but there are other issues. They are redesigning based on public input but there should be a place where people can offer even more input even when they present it to you, you could offer more input as to the historical value, it's a historical Plaza. Is it just going to be somebody else's vision, someone who doesn't live here, that doesn't remember that history? I think that the designers are dealing with public memory; public memory is very strong and if it's something that people are not going to like there are going to be issues with that.

BUMPER STICKER

Mr. Juarez was wearing a bumper sticker which read *"Keep the Lagartos at La Placita de Los Lagartos"*. He explained people are saying, "San Jacinto that's where the Mexicans lost" and "Let's change the name" but among the Latino community it's called "Placita de Los Lagartos"; that is the anger of that side. You remove the Jimenez and what do we have? If you remove the Jimenez sculpture, which represented the alligators that were there for 80 years, if you remove that, what do we have, what do we call it now? That is a concern for people.

2. Mr. Ralph Chavez, native of El Paso now living in Albuquerque, heard about this all the way up there. Mr. Chavez is very concerned about preservation and was disturbed when they moved the buses from the Plaza, he is now much more upset. He can remember as a little kid, walking around when the live alligators were actually there.



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PRIVATE/PUBLIC FUNDING

From this meeting and speaking with others concerned with this issue, brings in question the whole nature of this proposal, this project. First of all, the fact that this is a private/public project seems to be taking more precedence towards the private end of it, in terms of design and so forth, and the fact that the character of the plaza is being overlooked or bypassed.

CHARACTER OF THE PLAZA

It's not just a sentimental thing; I think it takes away from what makes El Paso, El Paso. Albuquerque has made a lot of preservation efforts and they have less to preserve. They were a smaller city when El Paso was already a thriving Southwestern metropolis. They wish they had some of the landmarks that we have. I think, definitely, the Plaza is the heart of this.

CONFLATION OF ISSUES -

REMOVING THE SCULPTURE/REMODELING THE PLAZA

Maybe this is a bit confusing because you have the mixture, the conflation of the issue of the sculpture and the remodeling of the Plaza. Both are very important and they interact but I think to some extent they need to be divided up. I realize that your Commission is limited in what it can do; you are basically dealing with the historical character of the Plaza and maybe with the sculpture as well. I think somehow the Commission, if feasible, should consider communicating to the City Council and the Planning Department that in some way the whole issue needs to be visited. Not just whether the sculpture gets moved, although that is the main focus of my friends and the campaign, but the fact that the character of the Plaza is also in question in terms of whether it will be an El Paso friendly character and the nature of the funding.

MR. JIMENEZ

I think you need to take it from the root, not just the surface of are we going to put the sculpture in a warehouse but to focus more specifically for now

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and allow us to speak. Regarding the Mr. Jimenez and the sculpture itself, Mr. Jimenez was very well known, world wide known sculptor. There is a Jimenez sculpture right in front of the main auditorium at UNM, there's another sculpture in a park in Martinez town there. Other communities are acknowledging his quality; it would be a shame if his hometown would overlook that. As a kid, my grandparents lived on Yandell Street, the next block over on Wyoming Street was where Mr. Jimenez and his family had a commercial art location; there was a polar bear that was used for laundry or something like that. But that made a big impression on me and it also made an impression on Luis Jimenez, although this was his family's business and that's why he began using Styrofoam and things like that. Not just myself, but a lot of people, don't want to see yet another aspect of El Paso go by the wayside.

Commissioner Guzman asked Mr. Chavez if he was happy with the status quo the way it is now, the sculpture, the Plaza, the star pattern, the percentage of hardscape versus softscape.

Mr. Chavez responded. I still miss the old Plaza when it was like a forest, when there were a lot of trees and you could get lost in there. I think generally that the star pattern was worthwhile. There was a little performance area over on the westside of the plaza facing onto Oregon Street. As somebody said recently it's a site specific installation, it was designed with that location in mind. Since the water hasn't been turned on for some time, it seems kind of funny that the top alligator is reaching out, like he's jumping off but if it had the water you would see the dynamism of that design. I think it would it would have to be moved very carefully for it to still be suitable for the Plaza, relocating it would be preferable to not having it at all.

3. Mr. Raymundo Rojas, of Save Los Lagartos and an El Paso attorney, stated that at the Legislative Review Committee meeting they really made a big



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thing out of the redesign of the plaza not going through the historic landmark commission. He was surprised that it's easily brushed to the side today. Issues like that may be something a judge would have to look at. In terms of looking at landmarks, there are also been instances, especially here in Texas, of statue and sculpture removal where it really didn't have anything to do with the land in any city it just had to do with the statue itself. I'm talking about the statue apart from the San Jacinto Plaza design and removal of it. So it's kind of disheartening that your commission should be easily brushed aside on the redesign issue itself.

Chair Riccillo asked Staff if the definition of contributing landmarks was done by ordinance. During the public comment, he had researched the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines and explained one of the zones is actually named after the Plaza. Furthermore, it even explains the historical significance of the Plaza as a contributing property. He asked if this was something that could have gotten lost, like so many properties we have or is there something that specifically details which properties are contributing that was passed as an ordinance.

Mr. Almonte was unsure whether something was lost. In the early 1990s it was designated, by a map, as non-contributing. Based on what we have before us, that was how the determination was made. The Downtown Historic District Guidelines were adopted in 1992.

Chair Riccillo explained if the guidelines were passed afterward, then they would supersede the previous ruling. The guidelines discuss the significance of the San Jacinto Plaza not only as the city's first official park but a stimulus to commercial and economic development, etc., etc.

Commissioner Guzman gave background information regarding the number of major redesigns of the San Jacinto Plaza. The point being the land is clearly contributing.



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Chair Riccillo responded, per the guidelines, changes made to a structure through time also can contribute to the structure's historic value. The guidelines were adopted by the City, by ordinance, and the guidelines state the Plaza does have historic significance by a number of different characterizations. He asked Staff which document was in place first. He felt that the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines were irrefutable in terms of it claiming the Plaza's historic significance and should be a contributing property. Regarding the meeting on Thursday, he felt the designers were proactive in asking Commissioners for their input. He invited the public to come to the meeting and to express their concerns.

Commissioner Guzman expressed Commissioners are in the position to preserve a 1990 design, or whatever the newest design is, knowing that the land itself is the historic part of it.

Vice-Chair Gardea responded Commissioners were not trying to preserve something from the 1990s but whether or not the proposed design is compatible with a historic district. He opined whether a property needs to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness or whether a property needs to comply with the design guidelines are two separate issues. We need to make sure we are clear on that. If the ordinance states the property does not have to comply with the design guidelines it does not state it does not need a Certificate of Appropriateness. In terms of the number of redesigns, he agreed with Commissioner Guzman, the existing design is not historic but the changes should be compatible with a historic district.

No further discussion from the Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:



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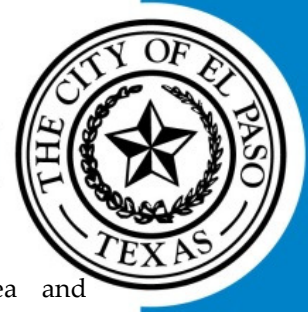
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Motion made by Chair Riccillo, seconded by Vice-Chair Gardea and
UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:19 P.M.

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